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Wiesenfeld

CHANA:  
A  
Remembrance



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# Chana: A Remembrance

by

Chana Koffler



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Chana Wiesengfeld

## INTRODUCTION

In order not to forget my past, I hereby recount  
my life's story.









## CHAPTER 1

### *Remembering my roots...*

My mother was Sara Dermer and my father was Anchel Koffler. I had a 4-year-old sister named Tuti and a dog named Lord, a white Dalmatian with brown spots. We all lived happily in the little city of Stanesti, in Bukovina, in a beautifully furnished three room apartment on a main street.

My mother was a designer and had a dress shop in our house. She taught the daughters of the local Jewish gentry and rabbis how to do needlework. My father managed a lumber yard and also supervised villagers who worked in the forest. Lord would always accompany him to work, loving to play in the woods and be near my father. My parents were both tall—a beautiful couple always beautifully dressed. My little sister Tuti was beautiful, too, like a little princess. We were not rich, but we had a wonderful life—going for walks, to movies, socializing with friends.

We were traditional, observant Jews who attended the major synagogue on Shabbat and all the holidays. There were also two *shtieblach*, but my father preferred the larger *shul*.

My maternal grandmother, Genendel Dermer, lived with her family in Czernovice, the capital of Bukovina. She was a very religious woman who wrote *kvittlach* (letters of requests for blessings) to the Wisznicer rabbi. Her three daughters—

Yetty, Feiga and Brana—and her son, Marach Leib, would perish in concentration camps.

Whenever I used to serve milk and cookies to my children here in America, I would think of her and wonder at how far I have come. I was her oldest grandchild and every time I visited, she would feed me goat's milk and cookies. It is strange what a child remembers, but those sweets remind me of her sweetness and love.

My paternal grandmother, Rachel Koffler, was a widow who lived in a village named Unterstanesti. She owned her own home, a farm and a piece of land that contained a pine forest. People would always come to inhale the aroma from the trees in order to cure their coughs. Two of her three children, a daughter, Chaika, and a son, Berel, lived with her. The family was not as religious as my mother's family, but I visited them more often because they lived nearby.

Every Sunday, a wagon with horses would come and pick us up and take us to their home. My grandmother prepared all kinds of goodies like pirogi, potato soup, cake—but my favorite was a sort of cheesecake similar to a cheese danish. I loved to sit by the river near their home and watch little ducklings swim with their mother. They reminded me of my father teaching me how to swim.

One night in the fall of 1941, we went to a movie theater and saw a war movie. When we headed for home, the nightmare movie became reality. Planes droned overhead and we could hear the whistles and crashes of exploding bombs all around us. The moon turned red. We panicked and had no notion of what was going on. But we soon found out.

The Nazis had begun their blitzkrieg against Russia. With







the approach of the invading armies to the Czernovice region, we began to wonder what was going to happen to us. Although I was only eight years old, I was aware of everything going on around me.

We were seated at the dinner table on a Saturday evening after the Sabbath when Ukrainian villagers came into our house armed with various tools—hammers, knives, and wooden posts. They yelled for us to get out and leave everything behind. They escorted us to the City Hall. The German army hadn't arrived as yet, but the Ukrainians had taken it upon themselves to take care of the city's Jewish problem.

The Ukrainians crammed hundreds of us into a few rooms—separating the men from the women and children—locked us up and left. My uncle Abraham Susman, for some reason I never discovered, was taken to a separate room where he was tied up and left. Using his teeth, he managed to bite through his ropes, break a glass window and escape to another town. Unfortunately he was caught by the Germans and sent to a concentration camp.

In our prison we had nothing to eat or drink. By nightfall, the Ukrainians returned and took out the rabbi and his three sons. Soon they came back and took out another eighty male prisoners. Then we heard eighty-four shots ring out on the grounds outside the courthouse. We knew immediately that our fellow prisoners had been executed. I found out later that my friend Marta's parents were among the first to be executed.

Some of the men, including my father escaped detection for a while because they hid wherever they could. But when the Ukrainians returned, one of them spotted my father's feet sticking out of his hiding place. Because this Ukrainian knew



my father, he called out, "It's Anchel from the lumber yard, let him sleep until the German Army shows up."

Later that night, the Ukrainians burned the synagogue and everything that reminded them of the Jews. Then it was our turn. By this time the Nazis had arrived. German S.S. men and Rumanian gendarmes opened the door to our prison. The Germans ordered the gendarmes to pile books in the middle of the room. Then they poured gasoline on the mound and lined us up around it—mothers facing children, with weapons facing us. It was obvious they were preparing to burn us alive.

My mother wasn't going to let herself and her children go up in flames so easily. With great courage, she walked over to one of the Germans and said, "Look at these innocent children and their mothers. Whatever will happen to us, will happen to your children and your wives." He punched my mother in the face. But as if he had been hit himself, he stopped what was happening and began to pull the books apart. The men did not light the pyre they had prepared.

We were sent back to our homes to gather whatever was left of our belongings and then driven out of Stanesi under the guard of the Gestapo and their Rumanian henchmen. When we met up with Jews from other towns, we learned that my aunt Chaika had been beheaded by the Ukrainians and that her head was on display at the local courthouse.

We started our tragic journey—the grownups walked and the children were packed into horse-drawn wagons. But many adults, especially the older ones, couldn't walk for long. One woman I knew, a Mrs. Kielstock, who could not continue the march, was taken into the forest and shot. All around me, families were being split up.



## CHAPTER TWO

### *The long march...*

Our first stop was a transit camp in Yedinitz, Besarabia. Surrounded by barbed-wire, thousands of us were jammed in without food and water. Those who managed to find some water quickly died. It had been poisoned. Hundreds were victims.

After a week, they dumped us at the Ukrainian border. There, on a rainy night, they took us out to a field. I remember Rumanian and Ukrainian gendarmes, under German orders, taking away the few men who were left with us in order to shoot them, my father among them. My mother, near hysteria, cried to me and my sister that soon we would join my father in the grave. But the men saved their lives by bribing the guards with jewelry they managed to smuggle out of Bukovina and they soon rejoined their families.

As the rains continued to pour, we were forced to march along a muddy road to another camp in Ataki. The yellow mud was so thick it literally pulled the shoes off our feet. We thought our mental and physical suffering was more than a human being could take. But things would get worse.

They marched us to the Dniester River and crowded hundreds of us unto a cattle barge. Once on the water, panic quickly ensued. Many fell into the river and drowned.

We landed in the Ukraine and were marched to the city of

Mogilev. We were now in the concentration camp of Transnistria. There the Germans moved us from one barrack to another. At the same time, they abused us physically and verbally, especially those of us who couldn't walk fast enough.

The following morning we were forced to march through fields and forests littered with the dead and dying. I will never forget the sight of all those babies and elderly people. One old lady wearing a beret was crying for help, but no one stopped to help her. As we continued to march, the children who were no longer able to walk were carried by adults who took turns.

We finally stopped at a village called Luchinitz, near Vinnitza. S.S. German headquarters was located here. They dispersed us to various villages in the region, where Jews were assigned to camps. We were sent to a camp called Zguray in an impoverished village. Although the Ukrainians there hardly had anything to eat themselves, they did share what they did have with us.

Thirty of us were jammed into each barrack, which had no running water or toilets. Soon we were all sick and infested with lice.

After we had been there for a while, my father was taken away and sent to Trechati, a small city near Odessa. There he was to help build a bridge for the Germans. When some of the men weren't able to carry on their work, the Germans killed them. My father somehow managed to escape. Growing a beard, he looked so much like a Ukrainian villager he was able to make his way through the forests for a month. Eventually he came back to us.

## CHAPTER 3

### *Life in Zguray...*

Zguray in 1941 was an open camp where inmates could communicate with the local villagers. While my father was gone, my mother, who was pregnant, used to go to the town and beg for a potato or an onion. Once she picked potatoes from a field and told me to eat, but I refused because there was a worm in it. "Eat the worm before it eats you," she said, desperate to get me some nourishment into me.

Every morning the gendarmes would call us out in the snow and count us to see how many of us were still alive. They noticed my mother's being pregnant and saying "another Jew will not be born," hit her in the belly. She went into labor prematurely and bore twins, a boy and a girl. The boy died at birth, the girl, named Nina, would never enjoy a day of good health.

It was at this time that my father suddenly reappeared. I didn't recognize him at first as he had aged, had jaundice and looked very shabby. But when I yelled "Papa!," I cannot describe the happiness we all felt to have him back. To prevent his being taken away by the Germans, we hid him in a nearby basement.

During the day, it was my job to gather wood. Since we were permitted to leave the camp perimeter, the Stars of David we were forced to wear differentiating us from the Ukrainian



citizenry, my search sometimes took me as far as four kilometers from home. To hide the Star of David I wore on my chest and back, I often covered myself with a potato sack. Occasionally, when we neared the main town of Vinnitza, we had to hide in the fields when the Germans passed by. I remember praying to God and begging Him not to let the Germans find us and kill us. Sometimes we found edible mushrooms and brought them home.

As one year progressed into another, in order to get food, my sister Tuti and I learned Christmas carols. Christmastime, Tuti and I used to sneak out and go caroling to earn our suppers. Because we were infested with lice, the villagers wouldn't let us into their houses, but they would bring out a plate of borscht and Tuti and I would sit in the snow and fight over it like two little animals. We did this for four Christmases in a row, and considered it a big treat.

After a while, my family developed a routine. My mother would often leave me in charge of both my sisters while she went into the village to sew things in exchange for food. This always proved difficult for me because I didn't know how to handle young children and I didn't have any diapers for my baby sister. Every time I had to care for them, the misery I felt in the camp only increased more. I was young and inexperienced and the sense of responsibility I felt for my younger sisters was overwhelming.

But to live we had to endure. Even when the camp was hit with typhus, with no doctors or real medicine, we cured ourselves with home remedies.

One day my mother's only surviving sister, Aunt Yetty, arrived in our camp. She had been in a hunger camp, Scazinitz, but managed to escape. Fluent in Ukrainian, she was able to

pass as a non-Jew and move about. Eventually she was able to find us. She told us that Grandma Genendel and my other aunts, Fanny and Brancy, had died from hunger. Their bodies were thrown into mass graves, she said, and vultures ate their eyes out. My mother's brother, Boruch-Leib, reportedly went to fight the Germans, but was taken prisoner and shipped to Auschwitz. There they used him for medical experiments and eventually he, too, perished.

## CHAPTER 4

### *Liberation...*

One night we heard a commotion. We thought the Germans were coming to kill us, but to our surprise and disbelief, hundreds of partisans were bringing us something to eat. We were the happiest people on earth. They couldn't believe what they saw—starving children covered with lice. They promised to stay and protect us, but in the morning, they were ordered to pull back immediately because the German Army was approaching. For us it was devastating. Then we again heard a commotion. The partisans and the Germans mounted a pitched battle, and the camp was caught in the crossfire. Many of us were killed.

Then an SS unit marched into our area. We figured it was the end of the road, but we saved ourselves by speaking Ukrainian and covering up the Stars of David we wore. Because they thought we were natives, the Germans spoke freely in front of us. They were very suspicious. My father came out of his cellar, not knowing that S.S. people were there, and a word of German slipped out of his mouth. But before the S.S. could do anything, there was an eruption of machine-gun fire. The Russian Army had arrived from Odessa.

As they ran for their lives, the Germans tried to use my father as a shield, but failed. During the firefight, he was able to escape. After the Russians took over the village, they





liberated us from the camp and fed us. They were happy to have found us, and we all cried together with happiness.

All we wanted to do was go home. But the Russians had other plans. They took the few surviving men with them on their advance, and it took almost a month before families were reunited and sent back to their homes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The return home...*

Early in 1945, we began the long trek from Mogilev through Besarabia. There was evidence of the German retreat all around us. There was fighting everywhere, but nothing could keep us from going home. Though we had suffered immense pain and sorrow, and had lost so many members of our family, our only thought was to make it home.

Although we were occasionally able to hitch a ride on a train or tank convoy, we walked to Belz—now a burning ruin. Eventually we arrived in Czernovice, but our ordeal wasn't over. The men who survived the trip were quickly conscripted into the Russian Army. Once again, my father tried to hide, this time in the attic of the house we were staying in. But that did not help. The Russians came looking for him, so he ran to the city of Stanesti.

While he was away, my mother became very ill. Taken to the hospital, the doctors told her she had an ovarian tumor, probably caused by the beating she received when we were in Transnistria. They said they needed to operate.

Sometime after the surgery, my mother stopped breathing. Pronounced dead, she was taken to the morgue. I was instructed to notify my father to make funeral arrangements. I was hysterical. As I sent someone to get my father, I realized that I



was now responsible for my two little sisters. But as word reached my father, a miracle occurred. A nurse who worked in the hospital morgue saw a body moving. It was my mother! They took her out to the emergency room and notified us that she was alive. We believed God had answered our prayers. During her recovery, my father took us and a few survivors to Stanesti, which now looked like a ghost town. We all lived in one of the few houses left standing and slept on the floors, but we had food.

Then one day our lives were again disturbed by Banderovtzy. A cutthroat band of Germans and Ukrainians fired on the house in which we were staying. They threatened to kill us if we didn't get out.

Again on the road with what little possessions we had, Russian tanks picked us up and took us to Vashkovitz. There we were able to find a place to stay. My father got a job as a director of the Forest Department. He started to make a nice living and sent us to school. But that didn't last long either. The Russians wanted to create a Jewish state in Biro-Bijan and began to send all Jewish survivors there.

Those were tense times. The Banderovtzy were still killing Jews and the Russians wanted to ship us to the far eastern territories. By the end of 1946, my father decided that it would be best for us to leave Russia for Rumania. We also had another mouth to feed—a third sister, named Cypora, had recently been born.

With help from the Joint Distribution Committee, we traveled to Transylvania. There we settled in the small town of Sibiu and shared a room with two baronesses. Unfortunately, this was a very difficult situation, for in addition to the cramped quarters, the baronesses would steal our food.

Nevertheless, we managed to live. The Joint continued to offer us assistance, and my father found a job.

## CHAPTER SIX

*I begin my own journey...*

It was 1946. I was 14 years old and very unhappy. Not only did eight of us live in one room, but because of the war I had been unable to continue with school and would have been put back into the first grade if I were to go back to school now. I wanted to improve my life, so I joined B'nai Akiva, a religious, Zionist Youth Organization, and participated in their activities. I wanted to make something out of myself so that I could immigrate to the Holy Land, which in those days was called Palestine.

Although they thought I was too young to leave home, in order to help me achieve my aims, my father sent me to an Orthodox Agudath Israel school, Bais Yakov, in Bucharest. For the three months I was there I was miserable. I withdrew socially and asked to be sent back to Sibiu-Transylvania. But I knew that this wasn't a solution for me. I couldn't see a future in Sibiu for myself, and I hated being crowded into a room with my sisters. As luck would have it, a family from Stanesti whose children had been my playmates, offered to take me in. So I went to Krajova, Rumania where they now lived and stayed with them. They were wonderful people, cared for me, clothed and fed me. After a few months I returned to Sibiu.

By the end of the year I was eligible to make Aliyah, to go to Palestine on my own. I joined Keren Kayemet and began to



prepare for my journey. Because the British, who ruled the country, said it was illegal to get into Palestine, everything had to be done in secret. It wasn't easy saying goodbye to my family, but soon I was on a cattle train headed for the new Jewish homeland.

We traveled through Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece into Turkey, where 1600 of us were crammed onto an old boat, the Pan York—Pan Christian. There was very little food, and our main diet consisted of sardines. We passed through the Dardanelles and, as the boat approached Haifa harbor, we began to sing the *Hatikvah*. But suddenly British boats intercepted us. Instead of landing in Palestine we were escorted to the island of Cyprus.





## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *From Cyprus to Palestine...*

The British took us all off the boat in Cyprus and brought us to their numbered internment camps, which were surrounded by barbed wire. I was assigned to a tent in camp #61. We were fed ill-tasting rations.

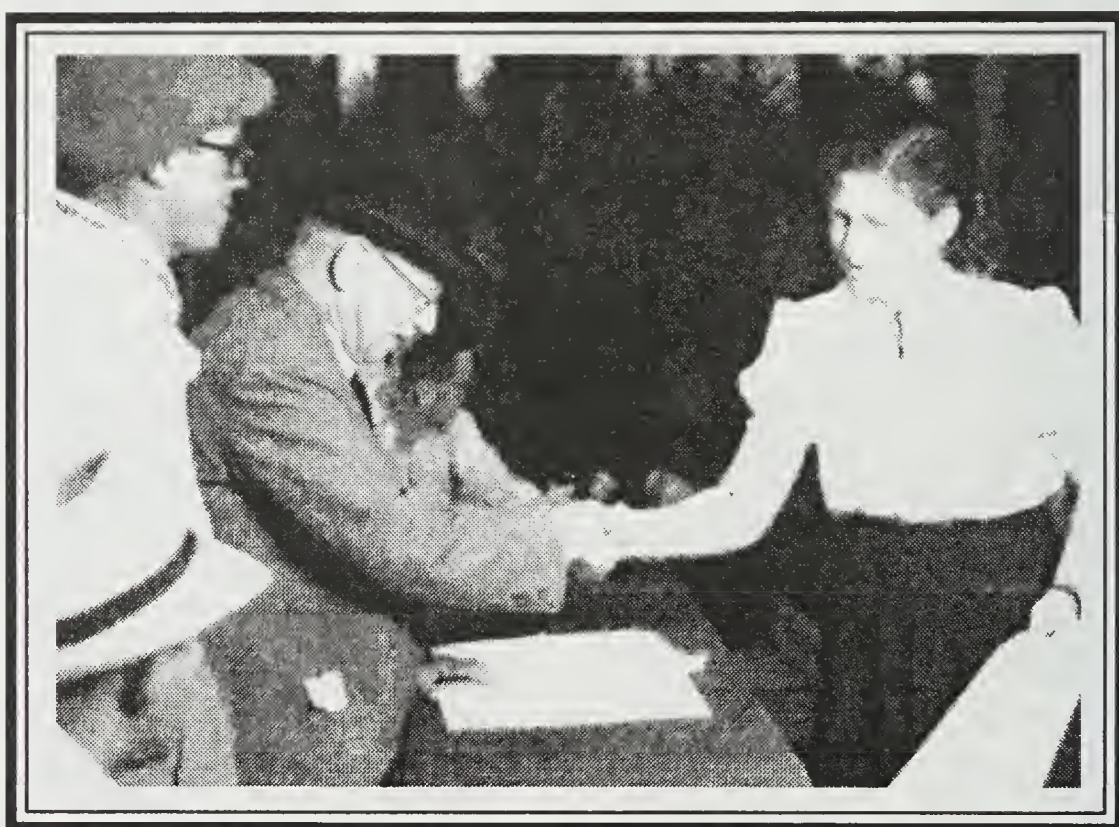
I was very homesick and would walk around the camp, crying. One day a Greek Orthodox priest spoke to me through the barbed wire fence and handed me an orange. I was very thankful and we developed a daily routine. Although there was a language barrier, we managed to communicate. I will never forget that kind, decent man.

A few months after we arrived in Cyprus, Golda Meier came to visit us and asked the British to let the children come to Palestine. She argued that we had already survived the Holocaust and had suffered enough. The British granted her plea, and each day ten children were taken to the Holy Land.

While on Cyprus, I didn't spend all my time feeling sorry for myself. I joined the Hagannah, the official underground Jewish Army. They trained people in tactics and although I was too young to be given assignments, I learned a few things. I also was also able to get better food rations.

Then one day I was one of the ten children chosen to go to





Palestine. Some members of the Hagganah came along in a small motor boat. It took twenty-four hours and God's help to overcome the stormy seas and make it to the port of Haifa. The members of the Hagganah quickly disappeared as they went off to fight the British. We children were taken to Pardes Chana, where we were housed in bunkers to protect us from Arab attacks.

At Pardes Chana, they gave us aptitude and intelligence tests. I was fortunate enough to be sent to an agricultural school, Mikveh Israel, near Tel Aviv, founded by the philanthropist Henrietta Szold. We studied four hours a day and worked in the fields four hours a day. At night we sang songs and danced around campfires. For me it was a wonderful, productive time. I felt as if I had found a place where I would find some meaning to my life, where I could be part of something.

One morning we heard that the United Nations had voted to give the Jewish people the land of Israel. It was one of the most moving moments of my life and made up for the loss of our holy Six Million. We went to Tel Aviv and danced in the streets. People were happy as they had not been in years. Everyone carried on.

But the celebration didn't last long. Within twenty-four hours, we were under attack by Arabs. Where before we had had to stand guard duty and fear mainly the wailing of jackals, now there were two-legged jackals to worry about. Though there was much to fear and we were still only children, our pride in our new country gave us courage as we guarded the perimeter of our home in the orange orchards of Mikveh Israel.







## CHAPTER EIGHT

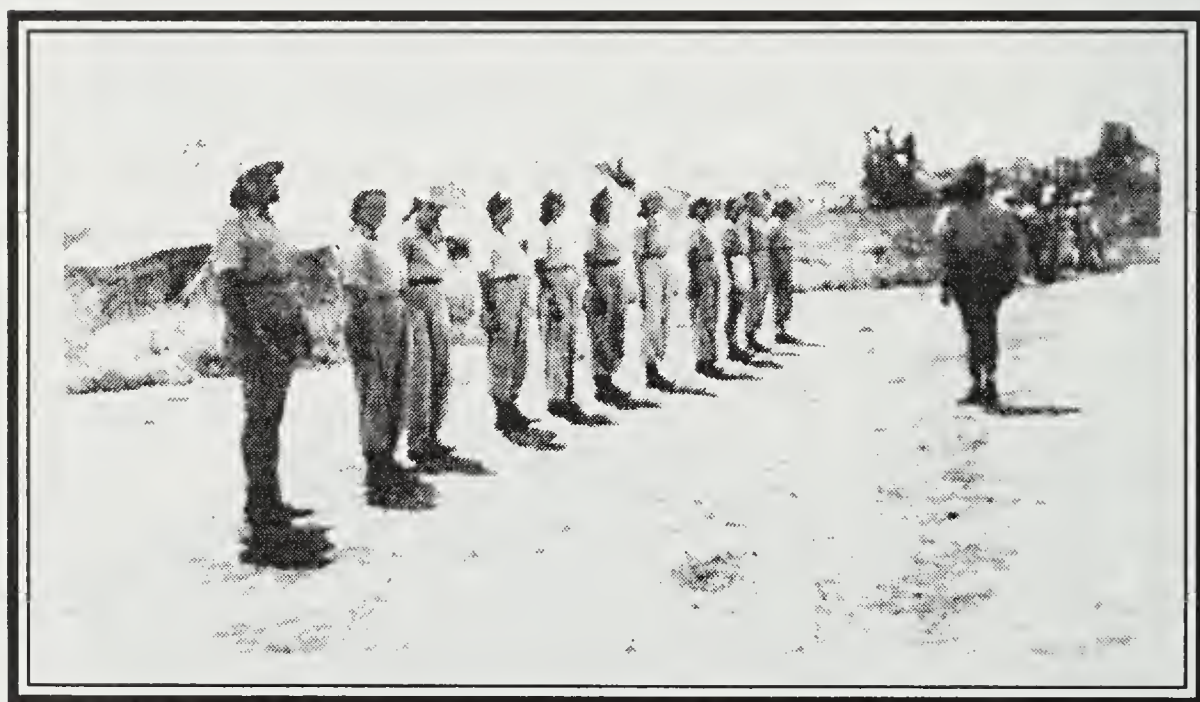
### *In the military...*

It was now 1949. I had been separated from my family for some years now. Although they had tried to immigrate to Israel, because they lived in Russian-controlled Rumania, emigration was very difficult. I begged the Joint Distribution Committee to intervene on their behalf. In the meantime, old neighbors from Stanesti found me at Mikveh Israel and often invited me to spend Shabbat with them. Frena and Mally became my “family” during those early years in Israel.

After I graduated from Mikveh Israel, I discovered that I really had no place to go. I tried enrolling as a nurse at Belinson Hospital near Tel Aviv, but fainted when I was taken into an operating room. My nursing career came to a swift end. The hospital director offered me a job as a cleaning lady, just so I could have somewhere to sleep. But after a few days I went to a hostel for women, Bet Halutzot. After I found some part-time work, I began to feel independent.

When I was 17-and-a-half, I joined the army. I took my military training and was sent to the airforce. I was finally stable, no longer a gypsy. I took a three-month course on identifying the parts of helicopters and other planes and was then put to work in the “parts department,” working with mechanics and pilots.

I was very proud of my uniform and looked good in it.



Occasionally some fellow soldiers took an interest in me, but I was too immature, still an innocent.

As my time in the army increased, I became more socially involved. This got me into trouble as once I returned to base from a party after my pass had expired. I reported late and was punished by being restricted to base and on constant guard duty for one month. Nevertheless, I enjoyed my military service. It was hard training and hard work, but I was a needed member of society and proving my value.









## CHAPTER NINE

### *Family reunion...*

Then one day wonderful news came: the Joint Distribution Committee sent word that my parents and sisters were going to arrive in Haifa soon. I saved all my pennies and went to meet them, but at first they didn't recognize me in my military uniform. Our happiness was indescribable!

The Jewish Agency took them straight to an Absorption Center, a compound consisting of tents. Because everyone was coming to Israel at the same time, the government had its hands full. Sanitary conditions were very poor, there was no hot water, the toilets were in the fields and it was a distance to get to them. The food was rationed and very bad. My family was to live there for two years.

When I was discharged from the army in 1952, I joined my family at the Absorption Center and tried to make conditions as nice as possible. I found a job working for the government and supported them as best I could. My sister, Tuti, now 16 years old, learned the trade of gold polishing and Nina and Cypora went to school.

My father managed to find a job in an auto factory. Because of my mother's health, never good since Nina's birth, she was unable to work. Nina, herself, because of injuries sustained by her premature birth, suffered from a condition similar to





epilepsy, and although she was cured of it, always had health problems. Tuti, however, found a job and also contributed to the family's upkeep.

I was working in the Haifa office of Dr. Eliezer Horovitz and his wife Sara, when I was introduced to their cousin Max Wiesenfeld. Born in Poland in the town of Yaroslav, during the war he had been a prisoner in a Siberian labor camp. After the war he had managed to make it to America and was now on his first visit to Israel.

Max was very handsome, a nice man from a good family. I went out with him a few times and soon he proposed marriage. I said no because the war in the Sinai had just broken out. Since I was in the reserves, I could be called to active duty at any time.

I asked Max to go back to the United States. We said our goodbyes and he took the last flight out heading back to New York.

When the war with Egypt ended, Max and I carried on a correspondence for eight months, until the U.S. government allowed Americans to visit Israel again. That's when I got a telegram telling me that Max was on his way to marry me on L'ag B'Omer, the only day you can marry between Passover and Pentecost.

He arrived on a Thursday. My family and neighbors went to work, baking cakes and getting ready for the big event. On Sunday afternoon we went to Tuti's apartment in Haifa and had a lovely wedding ceremony, chuppah, photographers and all, with thirty invited guests.

Max and I rented a room for three months, and then he went back to the States to wait for me. It took a while to get my visa because I had to be cleared through army channels. A few weeks later, I said goodbye to my parents and sisters, which almost broke my heart. We had only been reunited for four years, and now we were being separated again.





## CHAPTER TEN

### *My new homeland...*

On the 13th of September 1957, I arrived in the United States. My husband and his family greeted me at the airport, their arms laden with flowers. They took me to his mother, and my mother-in-law took us in to live with them.

Then we found our own apartment—a 6th floor walkup on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. I was lonely because I knew little English and my husband had to leave me to go to work. During my long hours alone, the past began to haunt me and I became very depressed. I decided to do something with myself, so I enrolled in Taft High School to take some English courses. Before long I was happily pregnant, and soon gave birth to a beautiful son, Jeffrey, who we named for my uncle Hersch.

I became a busy housewife, and when Jeffrey was two-and-a-half went to Israel to visit my ailing parents. I was glad to be able to see them again.

When I came back to America, I continued my studies in English, and four years later became pregnant again and gave birth to another beautiful son, Howard.

Max and I were very proud of our children. They were very sweet and bright. I became friends with other mothers

and we had a lot of fun together. I was overprotective of my children. But after they started kindergarten I took a little job in a Yeshiva as a teacher's helper. I also worked in a public school as a school aide. As our Bronx neighborhood deteriorated, we decided to move to Queens.

For many years, Max and I lived a happy and harmonious life, and enjoyed our two sons very much. He'd take them to baseball games, and we would go on family outings every week to the Bronx and Central Park Zoos. Sometimes we would go out to dinner as a family, to a dairy restaurant, or we would go to shows or movies. Max also took the boys to shul every holiday. We lived a happy American-style life. Then tragedy struck.

Max became very sick. Maybe it was a result of his imprisonment in Siberia during the war, but soon he began to go from one hospital to another with a heart condition that plagued him for eleven years. He had open heart surgery twice and then had a stroke. I was worried about the boys and how I was going to pay for their schooling. In addition to working full time, I supplemented my income by selling curtains at flea markets on weekends.

My sons were very helpful and very understanding. I told them not to be ashamed to work in candy stores, to shovel snow, to clean windows for others, to be productive. And we were proud. We refused to accept help from others when times were hard.

My sons became brilliant students and made the top colleges. Jeffrey majored in political science at Queens College, one of the schools in the City University system, staying home to help me cope; Howard finished Wharton Business School, received a Masters from NYU and Columbia Law and today is



a corporate lawyer. Unfortunately, their father didn't live to see his sons as "self-made men." Max died two weeks before our 25th wedding anniversary. Today Jeffrey has a prestigious job with the government and is also involved with the Second Generation/Children of Survivors movement. Howard is involved with Jewish/Ethiopian immigrants.

A few years after Max died, I was introduced to a very nice gentleman, who had lost his wife. We dated for a while, decided we were compatible, and married. Because we were not financially comfortable, I continued to work to supplement our incomes, and today we have a nice life.

My husband Nat has a fine daughter and two fine grandchildren. Jeffrey is married to Cindy, who has a degree in business administration. Howard's wife, Batya, went to Columbia University, majored in economics and is a professor at New York University. They have a lovely daughter, Yaeli.

I am grateful to God that my life is now peaceful and joyful and that I can share happiness with all the members of my family. Through the years I have learned that the secret to happiness is never to take anything for granted and to appreciate what is good in our lives.

There are many more stories, but these are things I cannot share—each of us holds inviolate some memories that can never be recounted to another. And so I conclude my story.









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